



Connecticut Students for a Dream

Empower. Educate. Advocate.

www.CT4aDream.org

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

March 1, 2023

**Testimony Regarding HB 6659: An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium
Ending June 30, 2025**

Dear Members and Honorable Chairs of the Appropriations Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

I am here to represent Connecticut Students for a Dream (C4D) and to speak on “HB 6659: An Act Concerning The State Budget For The Biennium Ending June 30, 2025”, about the human services agencies budget.

C4D is a statewide, youth-led network that fights for the rights of undocumented immigrant youth and their families. We do this through community organizing, leadership development, and advocacy. We are proud to be the only organization in Connecticut that is led by and for immigrant youth directly impacted by the issues we seek to address. Our membership is composed of undocumented immigrant youth ages 13-24 throughout the state of Connecticut.

There are important items being funded in the Governor’s Budget for Human Services agencies. But this budget doesn’t include the funding we need to expand HUSKY Medicaid up to age 26 for those who qualify, regardless of immigration status. Our immigrant communities need healthcare. A bill currently in the Human Services Committee, HB6616, would expand access to HUSKY to all qualifying immigrants under age 26. I am here to ask the Appropriations Committee to include funds in the budget to support this needed expansion of HUSKY up to age 26.

CT Students for a Dream and our membership believes that all young people need access to healthcare to lead healthy lives. The majority of our members are under the age of 26 and don’t have healthcare because of their immigration status. Adding the funds needed to expand HUSKY up to the age of 26 to all regardless of status would make a huge impact in our members' lives.

We especially want to highlight that many of our members are between the ages of 18 and 26. They are transitioning out of high school to the rest of their lives as young adults. Access to stable healthcare would allow them to access the healthcare services they need to lead healthy lives. And in turn it would set them up for a healthier adulthood.

Expanding up to age 26 will provide health care to a wide variety of persons: young parents, workers, students. There is a reason why a key part of the ACA includes instituting a policy that individuals up to age 26 can stay in their parent’s health plan. If Connecticut wants to work towards a thriving, growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals have access to health coverage

The estimate from a RAND and MPI study is that this would cost roughly \$18.4 million¹ and cover about 5,000² young people who are currently living without access to health insurance. The Department of Social Services has estimated the cost to be at least \$15 million.³ Expanding to provide access to HUSKY for immigrants up to age 26 would advance health equity in our state while also being fiscally prudent. Hospitals would save money on uncompensated care and the state would save money on reduced Emergency Medicaid spending.

The policies passed in 2021 and 2022 are working – over 2,000 undocumented children ages 0-12 have already enrolled in HUSKY since Jan 1 of 2023, and last year over 1600 undocumented pregnant people accessed critical prenatal services. We can continue this progress by expanding to age 26.

As we look to Connecticut's future, we cannot afford to sit idly by and do nothing about the lack of access to affordable healthcare. Today, this Committee can send a bold message that our state and its legislators believe in equality for Connecticut residents regardless of immigration status, and are committed to seeing Connecticut residents healthy and thriving.

CT Students for a Dream asks you to include funding to provide HUSKY coverage for undocumented individuals up to age 26.

On behalf of the C4D Community,

Camila Bortolletto & Anghy Idrovo
Co-Executive Directors
CT Students for a Dream
www.ct4adream.org

¹ Estimate is based on a [report by the RAND Corporation](#) and [data from the Migration Policy Institute](#)

² Estimate is based on a [report by the RAND Corporation](#) and [data from the Migration Policy Institute](#)

³ [Stated in February 14, 2023 testimony to Human Services Committee](#)